Al-Risala 1987

November

2-3 November 1987

Editorial

At a seminar held in New Delhi under the auspices of the Minorities Commission on 22nd August, 1987 on 'Human Rights and Value Education', views on the current problems of the Indian sub-continent were freely expressed by the learned representatives of the various minority communities. Part of my contribution to the discussion was to present an overview of these problems with special reference to the Muslim minority. The point most in need of stressing was that these discussions had been going on for fifty years, the last forty of which were supposedly years of independence, and yet no positive conclusions had been reached and no substantial gain had been achieved.

After giving much thought to the reasons for our efforts having been so infructuous, I have come to the conclusion that there is only one real explanation. That is, all our discussions on the subject have remained outward rather than inward-oriented. All throughout this lengthy period, our Muslim leadership has been at pains to lay the blame for all shortcomings upon others, Some have blamed the majority community, some the administration, some the communal organizations. The culprits are never Muslims, always others, one external enemy in particular having been singled out as an object of righteous indignation.

I emphasized it at the seminar and I repeat it now: Constant inveighing against the dastardly role of others only weakens Muslims by fostering the idea that being in a minority means being at a disadvantage. The consequent feeling of being 'deprived' renders them psychologically incapable of even the most ordinary achievement, whereas what is required of them is both superior thinking and superior achievement.

This feeling that nothing can be accomplished because one is the underdog is quite at variance both with what the *Quran* has to say on the subject and with the facts of history. The *Quran* states quite explicitly: "How often has a small group prevailed against a large group by God's command and God is with those who endure with fortitude" (2:249).

This verse clearly indicates that being in a minority is in no way a disadvantage, for, by following the dictates of divine law, a minority can always draw on latent abilities to outdistance the majority. It is the duty of Muslim leaders to explain to Muslims how this verse applies to them and how they ought to apply it to themselves. Stress, it should be recognized, is a great factor in drawing out potential. Leaders should, therefore, encourage members of minority groups who are constantly under stress (simply by virtue of being a minority) to turn this factor to good account.

History abounds in examples which bear out the truth of this statement of the *Quran.* In his celebrated twelve-volume history of 21 civilizations. Arnold Toynbee comes to the conclusion that all the great

civilizations in world history have been created by the minorities. But these were minorities who had proved themselves creative and had presented new and superior solutions to the problems of their times.

There are two schools of thought about the problems facing the Muslim minority today. Quite simply, first holds others responsible for all current problems, while the second holds Muslims themselves responsible. The former I would consider outward-thinking the latter inward-thinking.

The basic difference between the two is that outward-thinking arouses a sense of grievance, which leads to protest and complaints, whereas inward-thinking arouses the will to take action. Outward-thinking leaves the Muslim potential untapped. Inward-thinking calls their innate capacities into play, thus enabling them to march towards a new and brighter future.

Allah the Almighty is good and accepts only that which is good. Allah has commanded the Faithful to do that which he commanded the Messengers, and the Almighty has said: "O ye Messengers I Eat of the good things, and do right." And Allah the Almighty has said: "O ye who believe ! Eat of the good things wherewith We have provided you." Then he mentioned (the case of) a man who, having journeyed far, is dishevelled and dusty and who spreads out his hands to the sky [saying]: O Lord! O Lord! – while his food is unlawful, his drink unlawful, his clothing unlawful, and he is nourished unlawfully, so how can he be answered!

- Hadith

4 November 1987

The Power of Love

In the world, there is no power greater than that of love. Through love, one can win an opponent over to one's side and can turn a total stranger into a friend. …the love one offers must be heartfelt and true.

Swami Ram Tirath (1873-1906), an extremely learned man, was renowned for his sagacity. One of his aphorisms wisely observes that "on all the doors of life is written 'Pull' but we generally prefer to 'Push'!"

A fluent speaker of English, Swami Ram Tirath set off in 1903 for America in order to propagate his religion. When he disembarked at San Francisco, he was approached by an American who was interested in finding out who he was. "Where is your luggage?" asked the American, "This is all the luggage I have," replied the Swami. "Where do you keep your money?" was the American's next question and on hearing that the Swami had "none to keep," he asked him how he "got by." "I love everybody. That is how I get by." "But you must have some friend in America …" At this Swami Ram Tirath placed both his hands on the American's shoulders and said, "Yes, you are that friend." The Swami's action had a profound effect upon the American. He became such a close friend of the Swami's that he took Rim to his own house, stayed by his side throughout his sojourn in America and offered him every kind of service. Eventually the American became Swami Ram Tirath's disciple.

In the world, there is no power greater than that of love. Through love, one can win an opponent over to one's side and can turn a total stranger into a friend. But for this to be so, the love one offers must be heartfelt and true. No mere show of love can ever have the effect of genuine, sincere love.

Let him who believes in Allah and the Last Day either speak good or keep silent, and let him who believes in Allah and the Last Day be generous to his neighbour, and let him who believes in Allah and the Last Day be generous to his guest.

Hadith

5-7 November 1987

CHARACTER

"Man of character" means being predictably good, honest and dependable, and consequently inspiring in others a healthy respect for these very qualities.

We often hear the opinion expressed of some worthy individual that he is a "man of character". What exactly do we mean here by "character"? It is a word which applies to the personality and behaviour of anyone who has a strong set of principles and who believes in adhering to them, no matter what the consequences. Being a "man of character" means being predictably good, honest and dependable, and consequently inspiring in others a healthy respect for these very qualities. The term is most often used of someone in adverse circumstances who might imaginably compromise with his conscience, because of the pressures brought to bear on him, but who courageously refuses to flinch from his original position. A man of character then is one who listens to and obeys his conscience, even if it means becoming unpopular with those whose friendship he values, Character, indeed, is the moral facet of human nature which both provides us with a yardstick for, and acts as a monitor of our own social behaviour.

A characterless individual, on the other hand, will say what he pleases, and act as the mood takes him, without any reference to the effect of his words and actions on others. But a man of character thinks of others first, puts them before himself and sedulously refrains from conduct which could cause them grief or distress.

Ethics, the branch of philosophy which deals with human morals, is an extremely wide and ramified subject, which is split up into several schools of thought. We do not wish at this point to enter into a debate on its more arcane aspects: it is our aim rather to present a survey of certain simple principles, which, if faithfully adhered to, would improve individual human behaviour and, in consequence, produce a better society.

The principles we have in mind are those laid down by the Prophet Mohammad to enable members of society to regulate the entire range of human activities on a superior moral basis. Adherence to them means a better and more fruitful interaction between the individuals making up society, hence a friction-free atmosphere in which genuine social progress can be fostered. The best thing about these principles is their simplicity. They are so easy to understand that even the most unlettered of individuals can follow them – provided they have the will to do so.

Three Hadith

1. Do as you would be done by

This is a straightforward but all-embracing precept, there being no situation in which it does not hold good. It means quite simply, treating others as we would like them to treat us, no matter what the

circumstances. It means setting the same standards for ourselves as we set for others. And if it is not immediately clear to us how our behaviour should be patterned, it is only a question of our putting ourselves in the place of the other man, and doing our best to Imagine his feelings as if they were our very own. If we expect to have the respect of others, we must ourselves give respect where it is due. In this way justice becomes both reciprocal and universal.

2. Do good to others, or at least let no harm befall them.

By this, the Prophet means that we must always accept the role of the giver. Our first thought should be for the good of others, never of our own. Even if it is not possible for us to feel genuinely well-intentioned towards others, we should at least refrain from abusing them or doing them any other disservice. To be successful in this, we must exercise a strict control over our thoughts, words and deeds.

3. Never stoop to saying that you will requite good with good and evil with a worse evil.

Join hands with those who sever their ties with you, be forgiving and good to your transgressors.

The above precepts may seem difficult to the point of being impossible to follow, but they were the very bedrock upon which the Prophet built his own life. A man of genuine character, he went out of his way to deal with friend and foe alike, was quick to be conciliatory, did his best to mend broken relationships, was compassionate towards those who sought to harm him and showed forbearance even to those who actually wronged him. These were moral triumphs, and it should be the goal of every Muslim, no matter from what walk in life, to strive towards that supreme sublimity of character which made such feats a reality. It should be appreciated that following the "principle" of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" is what modern psychologists would call a "knee-jerk" response and has little to do with principled behaviour. Those who act out of vengefulness, or who even nurse such feelings, are simply debasing their own characters. No one of a superior character ever degrades himself in this way, being quick to see that revenge does as much psychological harm to himself as it does material harm to his enemies. He also sees it for the divisive force which it is in society.

A society can only be as good as the individuals of which it is composed. It is, therefore; of overriding importance that individuals who wish to live within the fold of society should grasp the significance of the principles outlined above, and begin unhesitatingly to put them into practice. It is only by making one's motto. 'Do as you would be done by' that truly cohesive forces, as a matter of individual and concerted effort, can bring society to the peak of harmonious moral perfection.

7 November 1987

That which is lawful is plain and that which is unlawful is plain and between the two of them are doubtful matters about which not many people know. Thus he who avoids doubtful matters clears himself in regard to his religion and his honour; but he who falls into doubtful matters falls into that which is unlawful, like the shepherd who pastures around a sanctuary, all but grazing therein. Truly every king has a sanctuary; and truly Allah's sanctuary is His prohibitions. Truly in the body there is a morsel of flesh which, if it be whole, all the body is whole and which, if it be diseased, all of it is diseased. Truly it is in the heart.

Hadith

7 November 1987

Salvation

One day the Prophet heard his wife Umm Habibah, pray in the following words: "Lord, long may I be blessed by the shadow of my husband, the Prophet of God, my father Abu Sufyan and my brother Muawiya." Umm Habibah," the Prophet said, "lifespans are all written with God. When you pray to God, you had best ask for salvation from Hell-fire."

(Muslim)

8 November 1987

Souls Stand in Wait

All souls indeed, stand in wait for the opportunity to enter the everlasting world of God Almighty. So great is the power of Islam to win over the human heart, that it can even overcome the force of arms.

The Turks captured the Greek island of Crete in 1669 AD, following which several wars were fought between Turkey and Greece for control of the island. Turkish rule finally came to an end in 1898 AD, but there is still considerable mention of Crete in the history of the Turks. One such history book, written by Mohammad Hafiz Qurayshi, and published in Lahore in 1922, summarizes events from the beginning of the Ottoman Empire to the deposition of king Abdul Majeed II. Referring to the Turkish war with Crete, the author writes:

"In 1066 AH, a Christian naval commander from amongst the Venetians came before Sultan Mohammed Khan IV, along with 30 soldiers who had accepted Islam in all good heart, on the way to Turkey. Hearing this the Sultan congratulated him and put him in charge of a ship-building yard. Not only did he please the Sultan, but he also rendered countless services to Islam in this way more than atoning for his past misdeeds" (pp. 105-106).

In Islamic history, there are numerous instances of enemies coming over to Islam in the very midst of hostilities, leaving their own ranks and joining the ranks of the Muslims. This demonstrates the ability of Islam to win over people's hearts. The truth is, Islam is the religion of nature and, as such, it holds immense appeal for all human beings, there being a secret longing for Islam already lodged in their hearts. All souls indeed, stand in wait for the opportunity to enter the everlasting world of God Almighty. So great is the power of Islam to win over the human heart, that it can even overcome the force of arms. It can be effective even in the heat of battle, and as history has shown, has put an end to age-long enmity.

9 November 1987

MISUNDERSTANDING

Misunderstandings arise very easily, but repairing the damage they do can be a long and difficult process.

The distinguished Muslim scholar, Ibn Jarir At-Tabari (839-923 AH), was born in Iran, but settled in Baghdad, after increasing his knowledge in various other countries. Two of his books are especially famous --- commentary of the *Quran,* entitled, *Jami al Bayan* and his History, entitled, *Tarikh al-Umam Wa al Muluk.* A Samanid prince, by the name of Mansur ibn Nuh had Tabari's *Tarikh* translated into Persian in 936 AH, some forty years after Tabari's death.

There is no doubting the fact that Ibn Jarir Tabari was a great Islamic scholar. Khatib Baghdadi wrote that no one had ever written anything to compare with Tabari's Tarikh, or his Commentary of the Quran. But when he passed away in Baghdad on the 28th of Shawwal, 310 AH, the Hambali scholars of that place prevented his burial in the public cemetery of the Muslims, because they were so up in arms against him.

Why was it that Imam Mohammad ibn Jarir Tabari met with such a fate? It seems that certain allegations has been made against him and suspicion had been allowed to grow around him, without the truth of these accusations ever having been looked into. The truth of the matter was that one of Imam Tabari's contemporaries was called Mohammad ibn Jarir Ibn Rustam Abu Jaafar AI-Tabari. The latter was a scholar of the Shia sect, and, in accordance with shiite dogma, did not consider it the duty of the faithful actually to wash their feet when at ablutions, but thought that only wiping them was quite sufficient. The Similarity in the two men's names was enough to cause people to attribute this belief to the wrong man.

On account of this trivial misunderstanding, certain fanatical theologians, such as Abu Bakr Mohammad ibn Daud Zahiri, labelled Imam Tabari a *Rafidhi,* whereas, in fact, Imam Tabari had nothing to do either with this heretical sect or with Shiism.

Misunderstandings arise very easily, but repairing the damage they do can be a long and difficult process.

1. The term is applied to a heretical sect of Shiahs. This is also used by Sunni Muslims for any sect of Shiahs.

10-11 November 1987

Creative Adaptability

Emile Chartier, the French philosopher, once remarked that "nothing is more dangerous than an idea when it is the only one we have."

Ours is a world of cause and effect and yet, with the best will in the world, we cannot always 'cause' the desired 'effects' to be produced. If we are to feel at all certain about attaining our objectives, we should forget about past successes and give our attention to past failures. We can all think of instances of well thought-out plans going wrong, apparently because of human or mechanical errors, or because of other circumstances beyond our control. Sometimes we have had to stand by helplessly, unable to influence the sequence of events or their outcome, and we have not been able to say exactly why. Sometimes we have overestimated the extent to which it is humanly possible to be instrumental in any given set of circumstances, but more often we have been baulked of the fruits of success because of a damaging inability to change or discard a brilliantly conceived plan. No matter how well facts are marshalled, or how intelligently reasoned a plan, these virtues exist only at the time of conception, and frequently lose in value as the situation develops. Unforeseen factors are constantly cropping up, and human unpredictability can reduce the best of planning to chaos. Once this has been understood, we have to make prompt modifications-major as well as minor-and sometimes we simply have to start all over again. We have to check for errors of judgement, see if alternative interpretations of facts are not possible, and take into account every new and changed element in the situation in order to check out a fresh course of action. However, many of us choose to ignore new sets of circumstances and deliberately avoid adapting to them, because we feel it smacks of weakness and indecision. But such action should never be so labelled. It should be seen rather as a superior kind of creative adaptability. Emile Chartier, the French philosopher, once remarked that "nothing is more dangerous than an idea when it is the only one we have."

The Prophet Mohammad's life is a splendid example of such adaptability, especially in his battle strategy. At the time of the Badr campaign he did do battle with the enemy, but at Ahzaab he thwarted the enemy by having a trench dug which they were unable to cross. During the campaign of Uhud, he actually fought with his opponents, but at Hudaybiyyah, he returned from the battle ground without actually having fought a battle. At Hamra AI-Asad, he marched openly and publicly, whereas, when he went to conquer Mecca, the journey was made in absolute silence.

Adapting oneself to circumstances should never be thought of as weak-mindedness or a lack of resolution, but should be seen rather as the intelligent tactician's formula for keeping success within his grasp.

11 November 1987

Hypocrisy

Deceitful behaviour towards God—By carrying out God's commandments, but not for the sake of God; for the sake of something other than God. They shall be sternly punished for their hypocrisy."

One particularly baneful aspect of hypocrisy—deceitful behaviour towards God—is severely castigated in the Quran:

'There are some who say: "We believe in God and the Last Day," but they are no true believers. They seek to deceive God and those who believe in Him: but they deceive none save themselves, though they may not perceive it. There is a sickness in their hearts which God has increased: they shall be sternly punished for their hypocrisy.'

This verse is *elaborated upon by the Prophet: "Do not try to deceive, for one who does so will find himself deceived by God; he is deceiving himself, if he only knew." when asked how one deceived God, the Prophet replied, "By carrying out God's commandments, but not for the sake of God; for the sake of something other than God."

Those who put up a front of engaging in the work of Islam, while in actual fact pursuing fame, status and worldly gain, would do well to pause and give thought to what they really are, and to what they are really achieving. "…… they deceive none save themselves, though they may not perceive it." They would do well also to pause and give thought to the fact that 'they shall be sternly punished for their hypocrisy."

* Narrated by Qurtubi in his commentary on the Quran

12-13 November 1987

Drinking and Progress do not go Hand in Hand.

Normally a man's conscience coupled with his fear of the law restrains him from criminal acts, but after a bout of drinking, his finer sensibilities are suppressed, and he feels free to turn to crime. Even premeditated crime is closely associated with the consumption of alcohol.

On the 3rd of May, 1980, a thirteen-year old girl called Cari was walking along the side-walk of a street in California when a car came hurtling down the road and hit her with such force that she was thrown upwards for a distance of 35 metres. Within one hour, she was dead! When the driver was arrested, it was found that he had been driving under the influence of alcohol.

Accidents of this nature are an everyday occurrence in the United States, latest statistics showing an annual toll of almost 50,000. Of this figure, no less than half of the accidents are due to drunken driving–the prime cause of death today in America.

In recent years, people have been awakened to the dangers of drunken driving, the principal champion of the cause being Cari's mother, Candy Lightner, who could not bear her daughter's death to remain an incident devoid of all meaning. Throwing herself wholeheartedly into working for this cause, she left her job, sold her property, gathered together some like-minded mothers and in 1980, formed the M.A.D.D. organisation – Mothers Against Drunken Driving. She set about gathering all possible information on this issue, making a special study of the rules and regulations against drunken driving. With the help of the media, in particular, newspapers, television and radio, she brought to the notice of the American public the yearly death toll – 25,000 – due to drunken driving. She also made the point that even those few who escape death are generally left permanently incapacitated.

Every day, seventy people die in road accidents, which means an average of one death every twenty minutes. Candy was so successful in shaking up the American public with figures of this kind that even the government had to take notice, and on the 17th July, 1984, President Reagan passed a law against drunken driving.

The American magazine, *Span,* (September, 1986) makes an apt comment on drunkenness plus mobility: Until the 20th century, drunkenness was a relatively minor social problem in the United States, because drunkards were rarely in any position to cause serious damage to anyone but themselves. Drinkers might brawl in the bars and public houses, or cause family strife, or upset an applecart on a wild horseback ride through town, but for the most part a chronic drinker was more to be pitied than scorned, and certainly was not cause for government concern. With the introduction of the automobile, however, the drunkard became a menace to everyone within reach of his desire to travel.

On the 30th of March, 1981, an attempt was made on the life of President Reagan. He survived, although seriously injured. Investigations at the time showed that the would-be assassin was under the influence of alcohol. Subsequent investigations have brought to light the *very* close link that exists in general between crime and alcoholism.

Normally a man's conscience coupled with his fear of the law restrains him from criminal acts, but after a bout of drinking, his finer sensibilities are suppressed, and he feels free to turn to crime. Even premeditated crime is closely associated with the consumption of alcohol. In America, a large number of prominent citizens, one of them being America's First Lady, Mrs. Nancy Reagan, have, therefore, taken it upon themselves to launch a crusade against alcohol.

While western civilization has taken so long to appreciate the enormity of the morass into which society can be led by alcohol, Islam has all along taught us its evils, and all intoxicants, even in small quantities, are strictly prohibited by it. Nearing the culminating point in its progress, modern civilization is beginning, quite surprisingly, to understand the value of a religious tenet which has held true, although intermittently flouted, for so many centuries. Its negligence of this truth, in the face of life's sordid realities, had taken a heavy toll in human life, broken homes and, reduced productivity. It is, indeed, tragic that it has come to acknowledge this vital truth with such extreme and costly tardiness.

> The blood of a Muslim may not be legally spilt other than in one of three [instances]: the married person who commits adultery; a life for a life; and one who forsakes his region and abandons the community.
>
> - Hadith

14 November 1987

Glorifying the Lord

Glorification of God is the explosion of God-realization taking place in the mind of a believing soul. This is a rich and amazing experience.

After mentioning cattle and the sacrificial animals, the *Quran* says that God made these animals subservient to man "so that you may glorify God for having given you guidance" (22:37).

Why is it that man is well served by camels and oxen, but he has been unable to press bears and wolves into service? It is because God has chosen to make the former instinctively subservient to man and not the latter. If this had not been so, cattle would have proved as intractable as bears and wolves.

The fact that certain animals are easily tamed and domesticated is one of the great blessings that God has bestowed on mankind. A part of man's faith is to recognize and feel thankful for such blessings – some of the wonders of God's creation. When a servant of God sacrifices an animal in the name of God, this act is an outward manifestation of his inward state. He is saying, by his act, "Lord, if you had not created those beasts as they are, we should not have had them to serve us."

This applies not only to animals, but to many other natural resources of the world. Everything bestowed upon man is a gift from God, but, if man is able to make use of them, it is only because God has made them the willing tools of man. Whenever man's eye lights upon anything which is of great service to him, it should cause him to remember God's munificence; being in this way, he glorifies God within his own mind. This is what the *Quran* exhorts us to do when it says: "Glorify your Lord, (74:3) and : "Proclaim His greatness" (17:111).

Glorification of God is the explosion of God-realization taking place in the mind of a believing soul. This is a rich and amazing experience but it can be expressed in the simplest of words: "God is great!"

15-16 November 1987

THE HELLENISTIC SCIENCES

The Macedonian king, Alexander· the Great, (352-323 BC) conquered a host of countries stretching from Iran to Turkestan, thus laying the foundations of the Greek Empire. Later, the Romans came into eminence. Among the many countries which they conquered was Greece which became part of the Roman Empire. The Greek and Roman Empires, now one, formed the mightiest of all the pre-Islamic empires. The increased affluence engendered by political successes afforded additional opportunities for academic work, and. it was under such circumstances that Greek philosophy and other sciences gained popularity. However, this philosophy was a patchwork of metaphysical discussion and far-fetched hypotheses.' When the Romans converted to Christianity, following the lead of Constantine; books on these subjects were banned as being harmful to religion.

It was at this time that the Abbasid Caliph, Mamun Rashid, wrote to the Caesar asking him to send him books on philosophy by Greek and Roman authors. The Caesar of the day, uninformed on this subject himself, made enquiries and was told by an elderly monk that all such books had been confiscated and kept under lock and key after the spread of Christianity. The Caesar then asked the monk what he thought of sending these books to the country of the Muslims. The monk was very much in favour of doing so. "Certainly, they should be sent," he said, "for a nation which reads these books becomes entangled in futile arguments, their faith is undermined and, in this way, they are weakened." So the Caesar had these books taken out of the sealed house in which they had been stored, then he had them loaded on to five camels and sent off to Baghdad. Jamal-uddin Qafti writes in *Akbarat-Hukama:* "They found a vast number of books in that library and, without scrutinizing them, took five loads of books from one end of the collection and sent them to Mamun."

The monk's prediction was borne out by subsequent events. In the second century of the Islamic era, these books so influenced Muslims that, in their preoccupation with classical philosophy, they began to base their arguments on hypothetical syllogisms, thus deviating from the *Quran,* which is based on the true facts of nature. This mode of discussion and reasoning actually became incorporated in the educational syllabi of the Muslims"—notwithstanding the fact that it was a deviation from the Quran—and thus became sacrosanct in educational status. Over one thousand years have elapsed since then. but, even so. Muslims are unwilling to extricate themselves from the labyrinth of logic and philosophy into which misguided reading had plunged their forebears.

Muslims' never-ending subjection to this unislamic system of learning is due to the compilation of Islamic sciences in this philosophical style subsequent to the first centuries of the Islamic era. So great is the philosophical bent in these books, that unless one has a thorough grounding in ancient Greek logic, their content remains incomprehensible, one obvious example, being the *Sharh Mulla Jami,* a book on

Arabic grammar which is still included in our school syllabi. Given the part played by logic in the compilation of formal Islamic learning, it was inevitable that books of logic should themselves find a permanent place on the Islamic bookshelf.

The issue which now confronts us is that if books on logic are to be dispensed with, other books related to allied branches of Islamic learning shall have to meet the same fate. Had these books never been compiled along these lines in the first place, this issue would never have arisen. As it is, logic has assumed a place of inordinate importance in our theology syllabus (based on the Nizamia syllabus) * in this way, thrusting truly Islamic sciences into the background.

* The Nizamiyah founded in 1065-7 in Baghdad by the enlightened Nizam al Murk, the Persian vizir of the Saljuq Sultans, the Nizamiyah was consecrated as a theological seminary

16 November 1987

The least one can do is control one's tongue

An Arab desert-dweller came to the Prophet and asked to be shown a deed which would take him to heaven. The Prophet told him to free bondsmen, to let other partake of the milk of his camels, to join with those who break away form him, to feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, to enjoin justice and to forbid evil. Finally the Prophet said: "And if you cannot do all this, then at least refrain from uttering anything but the truth."

-Hadith

16 November 1987

One who lies is a hypocrite

The Prophet was asked whether a coward could be a believer, and he said yes. Then he was asked whether a miser could be a believer, and he said yes. When asked if a liar could be a believer, he said no. Khuzaifa ibn'ul-Yaman remarked that in the time of the Prophet, one used to be counted as a hypocrite when one lied. "But nowadays I hear one of you uttering such lies at least ten times a day."

–Hadith .

17 November 1987

Islamic Democracy: A Via Media

> 'Worn out after an interminable meeting, a Tel Aviv company director said with a sigh, "If the children of Israel had been led by a committee instead of by Moses, they'd still be in Egypt.'
>
> *(Reader's Digest, October, 1984)*

Those who have any experience of the kind of discussions that take place· in committee meetings, know how trivial issues which have no bearing whatsoever on the actual matter in hand are discussed for days on end. Although, in actual fact, it is possible to make great achievements through collective effort, the question invariably arises as to what methods should be adopted in order to eliminate delays arising from differences of opinion, and to initiate real unity of action.

There can be two Solutions to this problem. One is to place complete trust in the judgement of a single individual, and the other is to set up a democracy. In the former case, all the people are at liberty to offer their opinions, but, in the last analysis, it is the leader's opinion which is accepted, and that, too, with a minimum of argument. In the latter case, everyone's opinion is sought and it is ultimately the opinion of the majority which is accepted. The second option is more appealing to the modern mind, but, within the democratic framework, discussions and arguments take pride of place over the actual amount of work done. (How common a human failing it is to talk more and work less!). We should, therefore, give serious consideration to the middle course which is held out to us by Islam. This entails the selection of a supreme leader on the basis of public opinion, but once this leader is chosen, he wields full powers, very much in the manner of the American President in modern times. This is a method which combines the maximum of efficiency with the minimum of social friction.

Anas reported that Allah's Apostle saw an old man being supported between his two sons. He (the Holy Prophet) said: What is the matter with him?? They said: He had taken the vow to walk (on foot to the Ka'ba). There upon he (Allah's Apostle) said: Allah is indifferent to his inflicting upon himself chastisement, and he commanded him to ride.

–Hadith

18-19 November 1987

ISLAM VERSUS OPPORTUNISM

Any apprehensions should be set aside as having been Inspired by some falsehood or by some distortion of the truth arising from the superficial quality of human vision.

There is a saying of Ali to which we should all give serious consideration : "Whenever people abandon some aspect of their Faith in order to improve their worldly position, they will find themselves exposed by God to even greater adversity."

This applies to nations as to individuals, it holds in all walks of life, and it covers all matters, great and small. Such guidelines, to be found in both the book of God and in the *Sunnah* of the Prophet should be religiously adhered to by Muslims as a matter of personal duty. Any apprehensions they may have about them should be set aside as having been inspired by some falsehood or by some distortion of the truth arising from the superficial quality of human vision.

There is one very important example which bears out the truth of Ali's saying, i.e. the communal riots which take place all too frequently in India, one of the rival communities being Muslims. Now, clear guidance on such issues is readily available to Muslims in the Quran and Sunnah, namely, that one should turn away from involvement in rioting; one should not allow oneself to be provoked, no matter what the provocation. Yet when such obviously practical guidelines are laid down before Muslims, they find themselves unable to put them into practice, because they are so preoccupied by self-contrived considerations. Their main obsession is that if they do not retaliate, the other community will take courage from their inaction, and feel free to make even more mischief than before.

For the last fifty years Indian Muslims have been following this path, which is of their own making, and the outcome has repeatedly underscored the truth of Ali's words. Having abandoned the teachings of their religion in favour of sectarian considerations, they are forced, time and time again, to endure riots, which are becoming increasingly savage and more and more destructive of the community interests which they seek to preserve.

God has always known which is the best course fur us to adopt – one which will certainly bring us no harm – and He has revealed this course to mankind through His Prophet. If we place our trust in God and His Prophet, we shall certainly achieve the greatest moral triumphs. Following any other course, no matter how seemingly advantageous, is a breach of this trust and can only lead us to ultimate ruin.

19 November 1987

The Marvel of Discovery

A spirit of enquiry is the key to all worthy success.

Every age in history has bestowed honour and glory upon the great discoverers of the world, for discovery of something absolutely new in the realms of science is considered one of the greatest of human feats – little short of a miracle. How does man actually reach the point of making a discovery? The answer to this has been very simply and beautifully expressed by the Nobel Laureate in physics, Albert Szent-Gyorgyi: Discovery consists of seeing what everybody has seen and thinking what nobody has thought."

The profundity of this statement is aptly illustrated by the story of Sir Isaac Newton and the apple. One day Newton witnessed the quite ordinary event of an apple falling from a tree – a happening which must be quite commonly noticed, but seldom remarked upon. No-one had ever really given any thought before to the *downwards* fall of the apple. But Newton's razor sharp mind elicited from this ordinary event an extraordinary significance, which led to his formulating the Law of Gravity. In something which everybody had seen. Newton discovered something which no one had thought.

Such a spirit of enquiry is the key to all worthy success, and without it, no individual or nation can rise to a superior position. No people can come to the forefront without fostering the will to discover.

20-21 November 1987

The Journey of Life

But do they give such careful consideration to the journey which will take them to the brink of the grave and beyond? It would not appear from present human behaviour that many are keenly interested in that inevitable Final Journey.

A book entitled, *Unsafe At Any Speed,* written by an American lawyer and published in 965, analysed to what degree the mechanical engineering of a motor car guaranteed the safety of its occupants. As the title suggests, the degree of safety offered was so low that it seems remarkable that anyone should have wanted to travel by car at all. This same author wrote a number of books on the perils of the modern machine, but "Unsafe at Any Speed" was the one which really made the American public sit up and think. Everyone from government officials to industrialists was startled into thinking not just about how luxurious or short a journey could be made, but about how safe it could be made for human life. Such serious consideration was given to this, that it sparked off a revolution in the motor car industry which had repercussions all over the world. Now, the feature of their products which car manufacturers display with the greatest pride is the safety factor in overall performance.

When a car is travelling at high speeds, all kinds of unforeseen accidents can take place which may be serious, if not actually fatal, for all those involved. To meet such exigencies, cars now have 'active' and 'passive' safety arrangements built into them, the 'active' set designed to anticipate and prevent, or minimize accidents, the 'passive' designed to deal with eventualities, should an accident actually take place.

When the safety aspect of car travel was spotlighted in this way, people all over the world promptly began to give their attention to it. Why were they so prompt about this? Naturally, anyone who travels by car is very serious about wanting to reach his destination safe and sound, and it was precisely this self-interest which forced people, everywhere to give this matter such careful consideration.

But do they give such careful consideration to the journey which will take them to the brink of the grave and beyond? It would not appear from present human behaviour that many are keenly Interested in that inevitable Final Journey. Few care to give it serious consideration. Few are of the opinion that even greater safety precautions need to be taken on it than on our everyday earthly journeys. People nowadays are so preoccupied by the mundane cares of the wayside, that they hurtle onwards, in pursuit of the material, quite unmindful of what their actual, ultimate destination is to be.

21 November 1987

Man and the Atom

When man's destruction, or ruination takes place, it is like matter being converted into energy. Defeat has a galvanizing rather than a destructive effect.

A locomotive consumes two tons of coal for every seventy miles it travels. A motor car uses up a gallon of petrol every twenty to forty miles. But when just twelve pounds of uranium is converted into atomic energy, it can send a high-speed rocket soaring 40,000 miles into space. Whatever the performance, each type of fuel must undergo a drastic change to produce the energy required. Coal and petrol are burnt, but for atomic energy to be produced, the atom – the smallest portion of an element which can take part in a chemical reaction – has to be smashed. Far from being destroyed, it is transformed into the most powerful form of energy ever known to mankind.

What the atom is to matter, man is to society, in terms of his being its basic structural unit. When his destruction, or ruination takes place, it is like matter being converted into energy: inner forces are released in him, just as nuclear energy is generated when the atom is smashed. Defeat has a galvanizing rather than a destructive effect, resulting in greater activity, greater resolve and a heightened sense of purpose; he draws upon latent energy to win back what he has lost and to rise to even greater heights. His hidden potential manifests itself with tremendous vigour just as nuclear energy is released when an atomic explosion takes place. The spirit which rises within him is invincible, and nothing can arrest his advance. Like a river flowing to the sea, he surmounts every obstacle in a tireless pursuit of his goal.

22-23 November 1987

A MAJOR DIFFERENCE
Then and Now

And where are the people nowadays, like the people of Mecca in the old days, who will be satisfied with nothing but the truth?

In the early days of the Muslims in Mecca, the chieftains of the Quraysh (who had still not converted to Islam) once gathered at the house of Walid ibn Mughirah to consult with each other as to what they should tell the people about Mohammed. One of their member suggested they should say he was a soothsayer. To this Walid ibn Mughirah replied "By God, he is no soothsayer. We have seen soothsayers, and there is none of the humming and hawing of the soothsayer about Mohammed." Another suggested they label him a madman, at which Walid ibn Mughirah swore an oath that he was no madman, for they had seen madmen, and there was no mistaking what madmen were like. Someone else proposed that they call him a poet. To this Walid ibn Mughirah replied: "He is not a poet either. We are familiar with all the various forms of verse and his words do not sound like verse to us." Another suggestion was that they should say he was a magician, but Walid ibn Mughirah rejected this idea also, saying that he had seen magicians and their magic." He does not cast spells as magicians do, nor does he tie knots, as is their wont."

The people then asked Walid ibn Mughirah to tell them what he thought they should say. His answer was that Mohammad was certainly none of these things and, no matter what they called him, the untruthfulness of their accusation would be exposed.

The chieftains of the Quraysh, although idolaters, realized that people would accept the accusations they levelled against Mohammad only if they were supported by the facts. Even although the people were hostile towards Mohammad, they would see through derogatory labels for what they were – misnomers. What the people wanted was the truth.

In those days, such was the conduct of even the idolaters of Mecca, but what of Muslim conduct nowadays? We see all around us that it is governed by an entirely different type of mentality. A Muslim leader has only to level an accusation against someone and his followers take it up and spread it around without pausing for even a second to consider whether it contains a single grain of truth, or whether the accuser can back up his allegations with substantial proof. In this way many a good name is unfairly besmirched and many a good reputation completely ruined. And where are the people nowadays, like the people of Mecca in the old days, who will be satisfied with nothing but the truth?

23 November 1987

THE MALAISE WITHIN

Blaming others for one's own unsatisfactory condition is a sure indication that things are not going to improve. They cannot, for, nine times out of ten, the malaise lies within oneself.

In April 1986, Dr. Abdul Haleem Uways, a well-known author of the Arab world, visited our Centre and spend a few days with us. One day, as he was putting his coat on a hanger, he was reminded of an Arab personality who had said, "All our own faults we put on the hanger of the imperialist powers," He may have smiled as he said this but, it is a most apt commentary on the Muslims of today. One has only to read and listen to Muslim writers and speakers to realize that they do little other than lament the ruination of Muslims. And for this, they lay the blame at the door of other nations.

This tendency has become so commonplace that even those who ostensibly have a different tale to tell are basically following the same trend. Once, in the course of conversation, I mentioned the name of a Muslim leader who had, in his speeches, exposed the anti-Muslim plotting of other nations, emphasizing how damaging this had been for the Muslims. The gentleman I was addressing promptly said that mine was an unfair assessment and that I should read another speech by the same leader in which he laid the blame for Muslim ruin fairly and squarely on Muslim shoulders. "This only goes to show," I replied, how this leader contradicts himself in his own thinking. It means that he has not got at the crux of the matter. Taking his work as a whole, one is left with the impression that he offers explanations to suit the occasion!"

In this world, one reaps as one has sown, and fulminations against others are little better than a waste of time and energy. Blaming others for one's own unsatisfactory condition is moreover a sure indication that things are not going to improve. They cannot, for, nine times out of ten, the malaise lies within oneself.

24-25 November 1987

ACCEPTING DISAPPOINTMENT

The key to success in life is just such acceptance.

Although from the very beginning, Muslims were required to offer prayers, the stipulation of five times a day was made for the first time during *Meraj,* the Night Journey of the Holy Prophet, and it was only after the Muslims' emigration to Medina that they started saying their prayers regularly, five times a day. At the outset, the practice had been for Muslims to make their own way to the mosque when the time for prayers drew near. But, eventually, there had to be some means of announcing the prayer so that the act of worship might assume a regular, established form. The Prophet consulted with the people on this matter. Some suggested that a horn should be blown, while others said that a fire should be lit on high ground. Several other suggestions of this nature were made, none of which met with the Prophet's approval.

Shortly after this, the words of the *Adhan,* or call to prayer, were inspired in one Abdullah ibn Zayd ibn Thaalabah, one of the Prophet's companions in a dream, he saw a man clad hi green with whom he was discussing the Call to Prayer. The man told him that the best method would be for them to recite the invocations of the Call to Prayer, beginning with "Allahu Akbar" and ending with "There is no God save Allah," and he thereupon recited them all for the benefit of the Prophet's companion. This is the same Call to Prayer that is still issued in a loud voice at the time of prayer.

Abdullah came to the Prophet and related what he had seen. The Prophet assured him that what he had seen in his dream was true, and immediately gave his approval to the Call to Prayer taking this form. Naturally, Abdullah ibn Zayd would have liked to have been appointed himself to issue the Call to prayer. But the Prophet appointed Bilal as the Muazzin, or "Crier," explaining to Abdullah that the reason for this was that, of the two Bilal had the louder voice. Abdullah was quite entitled to think that since he had received the good news of the Call to Prayer, it was, therefore, his right to be the one to deliver the Call. But the purpose of the Cal1 to Prayer was not to reward anyone but to announce the time for prayer, hence the appointment of someone with a loud voice. This decision was a disappointment to Abdullah ibn Zayd, but he accepted it. Indeed, the key to success in life is just such acceptance. A community whose members are willing to relinquish their own claims in favour of one who is more deserving, is sure to go far on the road to progress.

25 November 1987

The Best Price of All

During the Caliphate of Abu Bakr, there was a period when the people were in great distress because of a prolonged drought. But the Caliph told them to be of good cheer, because the Almighty would surely come to their rescue. Sure enough, the glad news soon spread that a caravan, belonging to Uthman, had arrived laden with foodstuffs from Syria. It was a big caravan – of one thousand camels and all the great traders of Medina rapidly converged on Uthman's house. When he emerged to meet them, they expressed their urgent desire to purchase the foodstuffs so that they could pass it on to those who needed it in Medina.

Ushering them inside, he asked them how much profit they were prepared to give him on this merchandise. "Twelve dirhams on every ten dirhams worth," they replied. "But I can get a better price," said Uthman, "Then we'll give you fourteen". Uthman again said that he could get a better price, where upon they put their price up to fifteen dirhams. But Uthman stood firm. Bewildered by his attitude, they asked him who could give him a better price, considering that all of the merchants of Medina were already assembled there. "I can get ten dirhams for every dirham's worth," he told them, then asked them if any one of them could give a better price than that. No one spoke up. Then Uthman recited the verse of the *Quran* which says that those who do good will be rewarded tenfold *(Anaam, 60).* He explained to them that he intended to give away all the wheat and other foodstuffs to the needy people of Medina.

Having faith in the promises of the Almighty raises one's courage to a plane where there is no self-sacrifice which appears too great or too difficult to carry out.

26-27 November 1987

On the Brink

We are on the brink of catastrophe. Have we reached the point of no return?

In 1945, the city of Hiroshima in Japan was wiped off the face of the earth by an atom bomb equal in destructive force to 12,500 tons of TNT. Now, just over forty years later, the world's nuclear arsenal has been built up to between 12,000 and 15,000 megatons, a megaton being equal to one million tons of TNT. Man is now in a position to destroy life on earth many times over.

What in essence, is this terrible weapon which he possesses? In essence, it is nothing but his knowledge of how to abuse nature's resources. It is the knowledge which, in the past, produced the sword by misusing steel and now, in this day and age, has produced the nuclear bomb by misusing nature's most powerful form of energy.

The materials from which such weapons are made existed in nature for millions of years without any havoc or destruction having been wrought by them. But, suddenly, they have become overwhelmingly destructive. Why? Because they have fallen into the hands of modern man, who feels free to use them where, when and how he pleases, no matter how selfish or perverted the objective. The entire problem of evil is simply a misuse of that freedom which is so highly prized by man.

What man fails to realize is that his inestimable freedom is not there simply for his pleasure – for the satisfaction of his desires. It is not, after all, his inalienable birthright. Nor is it there for him to play with as a kind of adult toy. No. It is there as a test. It is a test of his character, his integrity, his submission to God's will. If man uses this freedom in the proper manner, wisely, in humility before God, and with due respect for his fellow-men, there will be a bright future for the human race. But if he mususes his freedom to attain cruel and selfish ends, paying scant attention to Divine will, the ineluctable fate of humanity will be a senseless and horrendous annihilation. It will be the ultimate in divine retribution.

We are on the brink of catastrophe. Have we reached the point of no return? Let us not be so pessimistic as to dwell on this possibility, but think rather of ways and means of withdrawing from the edge of that awful precipice. Let us learn how to use resources in the way that nature Intended and apply nature's model to the structure of human existence, keeping in mind the commandments of our Creator. Let us accept that this is the task which faces both individuals and societies in the world of today.

27 November 1987

A POINTLESS EXERCISE

If only this had not happened at this particular time," All such statements betoken a feeling of unease or distress. Certain sets of circumstances come into being at the exact points in time allotted to them by God.

How often have we heard people say things like, "If only we had thought of this before," or "If only we had postponed our journey" or" if only this had not happened at this particular time," or even, "If only we could have lived in a different century!" All of these statements betoken a feeling of unease or distress at a sequence of events which we feel might have been different. If we had postponed our journey, we wouldn't have had an accident. If we lived in the next century, life might be more comfortable than it is now, and so on. Things, we feel, could have been better ordered in terms of our own personal destinies. But, recorded in the sayings of the Prophet, we find these portentous words of God: "Do not speak ill of Time, for I am Time, all is in My Hand; I make the night and the day succeed one another." This profound and awesome statement leaves us in no doubt that everything which takes place in the world does so according to the law laid down by God.

Just as the passage of time, and events in nature, conform to this law, so do certain sets of circumstances come into being at the exact points in time allotted to them by God. To rail against this system and to wish that the order of events could be other than it is nothing short of Speaking ill of God's law and amounts to an act of rebellion against God. Why then indulge in such a pointless exercise?

28 November 1987

OUR ACTIONS AND THEIR OUTCOME

When Nadir Shah, the King of Iran, attacked and captured Delhi in 1739 AD, he gave orders for his troops to kill whomsoever they came across and to loot as they pleased. The slaughter lasted from eight in the morning till three in the afternoon, and resulted in the death of 30,000 people. The scenes of arson and carnage were terrible to witness. On May 26, 1739, when Nadir Shah departed from Delhi, the spoils he took with him amounted to thirty crore rupees worth of gold, silver and diamonds. The Peacock Throne constructed by Shah Jahan was also transported to Iran on this occasion.

It is said that when the people of Delhi suffered this terrible affliction, some of them went to see the famous scholar, Mirza Mazhar Jan Janan and asked him to offer a prayer that they should be released from persecution to which Nadir Shah was subjecting them. But all Mirza Jan Janan had to say to them was that the outcome of their own actions had taken on the form of Nadir.

The Mughal state had grown corrupt and inefficient and as a result had become defenceless. Ghulam Husain, one of the most important Indian writers of the mid-eighteenth century described its condition thus: “The roads and passes being neglected, everyone passed and repassed, unobserved; no intelligence was forwarded to court of what was happening; and neither Emperor nor Minister ever asked why no intelligence of that kind ever reached their ears.” In fact, the Emperor and his courtiers conducted themselves so inefficiently in the face of an imminent invasion as to seem almost imbecilic. The Persian army had reached a point just a few miles out of Delhi before they managed to shake off their lethargy. When Nadir found no concerted attempt to oppose him, it is little wonder that he acted as he did.

When any nation suffers such moral degradation, it ceases to be effective as an active force. With continual dissension in the ranks, no army can act with the strength of unity. Once the rot has set in, there is an increasing tendency for the common good to be sacrificed for personal interests. The members of such a society are without principle and it is strength, not truth to which they bow. Such a nation is like rotten wood, eaten away by decay and destined to disappear from the face of the earth.

30 November 1987

‘Would that I were dust!’

When Umar, the second Caliph, was dying, – struck down by the dagger of Abu Lulu Firoz, – he lay with his head in the lap of his son, Abdullah ibn Umer. Umer said to him, “Rub my cheek in the dust Abdullah,” and his son did as he was asked. Then with his head resting on the ground, Umer uttered these words to himself: “Woe betide you, Umer, and woe betide the one who gave birth to you if God does not forgive you.”

(Tabaqat ibn Saad)

Before he had breathed his last, Umar, like a true believer, wished to be joined with the dust, and thought in fear and trembling what God’s judgement of him would be in the life after death. How different are the unbelievers who give no thought to such matters until it is too late – until they stand before their Maker on the Day of Judgement. The believer bows to God while He is yet invisible. The unbeliever bows to God only when He reveals Himself to him. The Quran gives ample warning to him with the verse: “That day is sure to come. Let him who will, seek a way back to his Lord. We have forewarned you of an imminent scourge the day when a man will look upon his works and the unbeliever cry: ‘Would that I were dust” (78 : 40)

31 November 1987

PUTTING HUMILITY BEFORE SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

> *Mosques are for the remembrance of God. It is not appropriate to conduct worldly conversations therein".*

One day, in Delhi, I was going down the stairs of the mosque after my morning prayers when someone, also on his way out, asked me, "Didn't you see that man praying with his sleeves rolled up above his elbows?" Without waiting for me to reply, he added, "Keeping God and the Devil happy at one fell swoop! God save us from such worshippers". As he spoke, his 10ne and manner exuded hatred and scorn.

I thought to myself: "How ironic that people should take away from the House of God the lesson of pride, and not of humility; they know that elbows should not be exposed, but do not know that one Muslim is duty-bound to show respect for another. How can a Muslim think he is within his rights in looking down on a Muslim brother and in talking of him with contempt and loathing?" But that, unfortunately, is the way Muslims behave nowadays.

We would do well to cast our minds back to the way the Prophet of God dealt with such situations, one such incident being related in the one of the six correct books of traditions. *Sahih* of Imam Muslim. It seems that a man who had recently converted to Islam, not being fully apprised of the etiquette to be observed during prayers, began to talk during congregational prayers in the Prophet's mosque in Medina. He was regarded with an air of disapproval by the worshippers all around him, one of them even going so far as to smack him on the knee to make him be silent. Later, however, when the prayer was over, the Prophet of God addressed him with such sublime gentleness that the culprit later recalled: "By God, I have never seen, before or after, a better teacher 1han he. He did not become angry with me, nor did he insult me, but simply told me; 'Mosques are for the remembrance of God. It is not appropriate to conduct wordly conversations therein".

32 November 1987

Serendipity

Man can discover the awesome splendour of the godhead only if he engrosses himself totally in his Creator.

Horace Walpole (1717-1797). the renowned Englishman of letters, once finding himself at a loss for an exact expression for the faculty of making happy or unexpected discoveries by accident, coined the word serendipity, deriving it from the title of a fairy tale, "The Three Princes of Serendip (in Sri Lanka). The word thereupon entered the English language and, since 1754, has become a habitually used expression, since there do seem individuals who possess such a faculty and important discoveries have often been made in this way. One such discovery was penicillin, made in 1928 by Sir Alexander. Fleming, a Scottish scientist who shared the Noble Prize in Medicine in 1945 with Chain and Flarey.

But serendipity is not all that it takes to produce a great discovery. Taunted by the remark that the discoveries made by scientists were) not really their own achievements, but the result of chance, the distinguished Indian scientist, Sir C. V. Raman retorted, "That is true. But chance of this nature only happens to scientists!".

Discovery results primarily from a finely tuned concentration of the mind. The more keenly one's attention is focussed on any given subject, the more alive one becomes to its hidden subtleties. In this way, the genuine scientist, involved as he is, day and night, with the object of his research, develops such a close mental affinity for it, that, he is able, inevitably, to progress from partial to absolute truths.

What holds for scientific discovery is no less true of spiritual discovery, and, for man, the greatest discovery he can make is God. But just as the scientist can make his discoveries only if he immerses himself totally in his subject, so can man discover the awesome splendour of the godhead only if he engrosses himself totally in his Creator.

Discovery of God comes from giving one's entire mind to God. It is only when one turns resolutely away from this material world in order to contemplate the divine processes of nature, that one becomes aware, in every fibre of one's being, of the magnificence of the Supreme Reality.